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SUBJECT: EXPANDING THE ADRIATIC CHARTER

REF: A. STATE 85946
[1](#)B. ZAGREB 620
[1](#)C. SKOPJE 519
[1](#)D. TIRANA 649

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request cable. Please see paragraph [1](#)8.

[1](#)2. (U) Objective: To capitalize on Albania, Croatia and Macedonia's affirmation that the Adriatic Charter should be expanded to include Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro by outlining a process by which they will offer them full participation in the near-term while leaving the door open to Serbia to join at a later date.

[1](#)3. (SBU) BACKGROUND: In response to our recent demarche (ref A), Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia confirmed they see continued value in the Adriatic Charter mechanism and support expansion to include Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and eventually Serbia. The Adriatic Charter (A3) - signed on May 2, 2003 in Tirana - has played an important role in promoting regional cooperation and furthering the Euro-Atlantic integration efforts of Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia. The Charter, modeled on the Baltic Charter from 1998, has institutionalized peace and stability within the framework of joint efforts to fulfill NATO aspirations. It helped transform the A3 nations from consumers to producers of security by promoting reforms and supporting the efforts of state institutions, particularly in times of crises. In addition, A3 exercises, deployments, and training activities have served as a litmus test for multinational interoperability, a core principle of NATO membership. A joint A3 medical team has been deployed as part of ISAF in Afghanistan.

[1](#)3. (U) Since the Charter's inception, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia have participated as informal observers at Ministerial meetings and joint activities. Paragraph 13 of the Charter explicitly recognizes that the A3's efforts at Euro-Atlantic integration will be enhanced by the participation of all neighbors in regional and multilateral institutions.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Specifically in response to our demarche, Croatia noted that it was already cooperating with Montenegro and has near-term plans to consult with Bosnia (ref B), and agreed that Macedonia could still serve as a mentor to new countries, even though it technically remains a NATO aspirant. Albania raised concern about Macedonia's difficult position should its dispute with Greece not be resolved before the April summit and felt the time may not yet be right to invite Serbia, but still supported expansion to include the first two (ref C). Macedonia stated willingness to support new Adriatic Charter participants but fretted about keeping Croatia and Albania fully engaged in the

process (ref D). END BACKGROUND.

¶5. (SBU) The Allies intrinsically acknowledged the A3's successes at NATO's Bucharest Summit. Invitations were granted to Albania and Croatia, but Macedonia was held back solely due to a bilateral issue with Greece over its name. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro moved into Intensified Dialogue (ID) with NATO, while the door remains open for Serbia to do the same.

¶6. (SBU) In a region that recently experienced acute violence and dysfunctional institutions, the Charter has helped to amplify and concentrate NATO's effects on reforming military capabilities and building democratic institutions. The U.S. participation helped guarantee the positive reform efforts of the A3, especially under difficult circumstances in each country. The USG now places the emphasis on the A3 to work together and guarantee the pace and quality of reforms among its neighbors. The Charter has been an effective forum for aspirants to share best practices, build trust, and further cooperation on common goals. We foresee the original A3 countries would play a mentoring role to new participants.

¶7. (SBU) As a next step, we envision a way to expand the Adriatic Charter would be an exchange of diplomatic notes, followed by a meeting of the expanded five countries before the end of 2008. First, Bosnia and Herzegovina and

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Montenegro should be encouraged to formally request participation via diplomatic note. Macedonia, as the rotating A3 chair, should coordinate with Croatia and Albania a response via diplomatic note extending the invitation to join. This note could reference paragraph 13 of the Adriatic Charter, in which the A3 affirmed "their determination to further enhance bilateral, regional and multilateral relations between themselves and Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and with other neighbors." It might also note that the A3 countries would assist the new participants to pursue their NATO aspirations. After Bosnia and Montenegro positively respond via diplomatic note, Macedonia should organize a meeting of the expanded Adriatic Charter countries before the end of 2008. While we believe this process would be sufficient to make Adriatic Charter expansion official, it is possible the countries would prefer to formalize the expansion via a simple joint declaration at the expanded meeting or perhaps an addendum to the original Charter, to possibly include a signing ceremony.

¶8. (U) The Department requests that Posts deliver the following talking points to appropriate officials in their host government.

BEGIN TALKING POINTS

Tirana and Zagreb:

- Bucharest decision rewarded your efforts and demonstrated the value and success of regional cooperation.
- You agreed again recently the Charter should be updated to include Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro as full participants and the door should also be left open for Serbia.
- The U.S. believes the Charter can continue to provide a useful mechanism and support for developing NATO's relationship with the countries of the region, and therefore we intend to continue our active support for the Charter's activities. We expect continued, serious participation on your part as well, including high-level representation and use of the rotating chair position to the fullest extent possible.
- Your role as a mentor to new participants will be vital to their progress.
- We believe that expansion of the Adriatic Charter could be achieved via an exchange of diplomatic notes and wanted to get your views on the way forward.
- For example, once Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro formally request participation, Macedonia as the rotating

chair could coordinate the response officially inviting them to join.

-- Once the exchange of diplomatic notes was complete, a meeting of the expanded Adriatic Charter countries could be held.

-- While we believe this process would make the Adriatic Charter expansion official, we are also open to other options, such as having Charter participants make a simple joint declaration at the expanded meeting to note the new participants. Another option would be to further formalize the arrangement via an addendum to the charter. We would be interested in your views on whether either a declaration or an addendum would be useful or necessary, or whether an exchange of diplomatic notes and an expanded meeting would be best.

-- We urge that the process be completed by the end of 2008.

Skopje:

-- USG remains committed to your NATO membership aspirations; partnership agreement signed in May demonstrates unwavering support of USG.

-- We are pleased that you agree the Charter should be updated to include Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro as full participants, and that the door should also be left open for Serbia.

-- Macedonia has made tremendous strides in working toward NATO membership; your neighbors need to learn from your efforts. You can further demonstrate that you can shoulder the responsibilities of Alliance membership by using enhanced Adriatic Charter to mentor other NATO aspirants and advance regional stability efforts.

-- The US believes the Charter can continue to provide a useful mechanism and support for developing NATO's relationship with the countries of the region, and therefore we intend to continue our active support for the Charter's activities.

--- Your role as a mentor to new participants will be vital to their progress.

-- We believe that expansion of the Adriatic Charter could be

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achieved via an exchange of diplomatic notes and wanted to get your views on the way forward.

-- For example, once Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro formally request participants, Macedonia as the rotating chair could coordinate the response officially inviting them to join.

-- Once the exchange of diplomatic notes is complete, a meeting of the expanded Adriatic Charter countries could be held.

-- While we believe this process would make the Adriatic Charter expansion official, we are also open to other options, such as having Charter participants make a simple joint declaration at the expanded meeting to note the new participants. Another option would be to further formalize the arrangement via an addendum to the charter. We would be interested in your views on whether either a declaration or an addendum would be useful or necessary, or whether an exchange of diplomatic notes and an expanded meeting would be best.

-- We urge that the process be completed by the end of 2008.

-- We urge you to take the lead as the current chair and look forward to working with you closely to make this happen.

Bosnia and Montenegro:

-- USG welcomes your deeper engagement with NATO and the Bucharest decision to start Intensified Dialogue (ID).

-- The road ahead will be difficult, but your commitment to reform and your performance can demonstrate to Allies that you are serious about membership.

-- You have the benefit of neighbors and Allies who have traveled this path ahead of you; it is critical that you follow their good examples and avoid the pitfalls they experienced.

-- Understand your interest in joining Adriatic Charter as full participants; U.S. consulted with A3 to update Charter

to reflect post-Bucharest situation and they agree that expansion is a good idea.
-- We believe Charter remains useful mechanism for regional cooperation toward Euro-Atlantic integration and support your request to join.
-- The door should also be left open for Serbia.
-- Should the A3 countries agree to your participation in the Charter, we would expect serious participation on your part, including high-level representation and use of the rotating chair position to the fullest extent possible.

Serbia:

-- USG continues to view Serbia as an important member of the Euro-Atlantic community and supports your full integration into its institutions.
-- Bucharest declaration made clear that the door remains open for deeper engagement between NATO and Serbia.
-- The process is demand-driven; Allies recognize that Serbia will move forward at its own pace.
-- We welcome GoS comments on intended further PfP engagement.
-- We are working with participants in the Adriatic Charter to update the Charter to reflect post-Bucharest situation.
-- We believe Charter remains useful mechanism for regional cooperation toward Euro-Atlantic integration and we support Bosnia and Herzegovina's and Montenegro's request to join the expanded A3 within their new status in ID.
-- We also believe that Serbia should become a full participant after the GoS moves forward on its NATO path; until then, we look forward to your continued participation in observer status.

END TALKING POINTS.
RICE